

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A system and method for configuring a system in which one or more centrally located computers are coupled to one or more human interfaces (HIs), and in which
5 removable function modules are used to provide additional functionality to the computers. Each computer includes all the elements that make up a standard personal computer, such as a PC motherboard with a microprocessor CPU, memory, and network and interface logic, configured on a single card, and is called a computer card. The system includes a cabinet, or cage, with slots for accepting a plurality of computer cards, and a cage connector which couples to each inserted computer card. A removable
10 function module engages the cage connector via a module connector. The use of the cage connector as an intermediate connection between the computer cards and the function module allows removal and/or exchange of computer cards without the need to disconnect the cables from the cage, as well as removal and/or exchange of the function module without the need to disconnect the computer cards. Each removable function
15 module includes cable connectors corresponding to each computer card slot which may couple to one or more cables for communicating with external systems, such as networks and/or human interface devices, and circuitry which provides additional functionality to the computer cards. Each removable function module may include multiple circuit
20 boards to provide multiple additional functions to the system, such as network processes, switching, routing, analog and digital telephony, video, audio, or other functions.